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BANGALORE, THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 1930.

PART I.

IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT ORDERS.

CHIEF SECRETARIAT.

Working of Village Panchayets.

READ—

Letter No. G. A. 50—29, * dated 27th January 1930, from the Revenue Commissioner in Mysore, submitting a report on the working of the Village Panchayets during the year 1928-29.

* (Printed as an accompaniment.)

ORDER No. L. 7092-7121—V. P. 45-29-3, DATED 4—5TH APRIL 1930.

It is reported that the introduction of the scheme of Village Panchayets has been completed practically throughout the State and that in the few remaining places, mostly Inam villages, where Panchayets have yet to be organised, necessary steps are being taken to constitute them. There were 8,898 Panchayets and 240 hamlets at the close of the year.

2. The average number of meetings held by Panchayets varied from 2·3 per year in the Bangalore and Hassan Districts to 4·1 in the Chitaldrug District. Government agree with the Revenue Commissioner that regular meetings once a month should be insisted upon and note that instructions to this effect have already been issued to local officers.

3. Although the income of the Panchayets during the year amounted to Rs. 12,19,936, showing an improvement of nearly 30 per cent, over the figure recorded for the year 1927-28, the collection work was far from satisfactory. Including arrears amounting to Rs. 12,42,677, the total demand for the year was Rs. 28,60,392. But the actual realisations were only Rs. 12,31,255, leaving a balance of Rs. 6,29,137 at the end of the year. It is stated that the latter figure includes arrears (partly time-barred) which had accrued in some Panchayet areas under the old regulation. But making due allowance for this fact, it is observed that in the course of the year the

amount left uncollected increased by nearly Rs. 4 lakhs, showing that the collection even of the current demand did not receive sufficient attention at the hands of the Panchayets and their Chairmen. Some improvement is reported to have taken place recently as a result of entrusting collection work more largely to village officers and of making the Amildars directly responsible for its supervision.

4. The Panchayets had at their disposal an aggregate sum of nearly Rs. 26½ lakhs, including the opening balance at their credit amounting Rs. 14,20,765. The expenditure incurred during the year was about Rs. 4½ lakhs as detailed in the margin, against Rs. 2,80,516 in the previous year. In addition, works of common utility of the value of nearly Rs. 2 lakhs were carried out by means of weekly labour contributed by the villagers. The year closed with a cash balance of Rs. 21,90,487 in favour of the Panchayets. This compared with similar figures for the previous two years, shows an increase in the surplus funds of Panchayets at the rate of about Rs. 7 lakhs per year.

	Rs.
Public works	1,87,048
Conservancy and Sanitary ...	49,912
Water supply and maintenance ...	55,550
Street lighting	10,174
General Administration and collection.	43,175
Miscellaneous	99,366
Total ...	4,50,234

5. The inability of Village Panchayets to spend more than a small part of their income is attributed partly to the fact that many of these Panchayets are individually too poor to undertake any tangible work until they accumulate more funds. On the other hand, it is possible that even Panchayets whose present funds are adequate have not seriously taken up their duties. But the art of wise spending comes only with experience and at the present stage of the progress of the scheme, it is better for the Panchayets to restrict expenditure on recurring services, if they cannot adequately provide for them, and to conserve their resources so as to be able to carry out works of permanent utility at a future date. As a means of accelerating the execution of such works, it is suggested that Government should, in suitable cases, grant advances to Village Panchayets and recover the same from their future income. Detailed proposals received in this matter are under the consideration of Government. Meanwhile Government note that steps have been taken to prepare for each Panchayet a programme of work which it should undertake during the next few years and that special prominence is being given in this connection to the supply of drinking water to villages.

6. Conferences were held in most of the Taluks and District Panchayet Conferences were also held along with the District Conferences. In connection with the Dasara Exhibition in 1929, a Village Panchayet Court was organised with a view to stimulating public interest in village planning and improvement. Several road-side villages in each hobli have been selected for special attention with a view to developing them as model villages. Government have read with interest the long list of improvements proposed or undertaken in the several villages mentioned in the report and wish to record their appreciation of the services of the several non-official gentlemen who are reported to have taken special interest in the administration of Village Panchayets.

7. By emphasising the various defects in Panchayet administration disclosed by the report, Government do not wish to suggest that they are dissatisfied with the progress which has been made in the short period during which the scheme has been in effective operation. Almost all the Panchayets are levying obligatory taxes. Some of them are coming forward with voluntary proposals for additional taxation. The system of weekly labour is being extended. A number of Panchayets have shown commendable, if somewhat sporadic, enterprise in carrying out schemes of local improvement and in providing amenities for the village population. One outstanding result of the scheme has been that it has placed on the hands of Panchayets an independent yearly income which in the aggregate, is nearly equal to the income of the District Boards. To develop these resources with care and to utilise them to the advantage of the rural population is the task which awaits the attention of the Panchayets as well as of the local officers, whose initiative and guidance, Government are glad to acknowledge are to no small extent responsible for the good results so far achieved. Government also wish to record their appreciation of the keen interest taken by the Revenue Commissioner in the administration of Village Panchayets.

N. MADHAVA RAO,
Chief Secretary to Government.